



THE LITERACY COUNCIL:
A PARTNER IN READING

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United Way
of Central Alabama, Inc.

January 19, 2006

The Honorable Mike Leavitt, Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Hubert Humphrey Building
200 Independence Avenue, SW, Room 615F
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Leavitt:

On behalf of The Literacy Council (located in Central Alabama), I would like to commend the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) for revising the prescribed format and content of prescription drug labels. This decision is both practical and necessary in assisting our community with their healthcare needs.

One out of four adult Alabamians is functionally illiterate or what we call "a level one reader". A level one reader has difficulty reading street signs to follow directions or find a new location. A level one reader must carry cash at all times in hopes that they have enough to pay their bills or to make purchases because they cannot fill out a check or complete a credit card application. A level one reader cannot complete a job application to pursue employment. A level one reader has difficulty reading a prescription to give a child or themselves the correct dosage of medicine.

Complex labels are not helpful for patients. They are confusing, complex and rarely understandable. Simplifying prescription labels will make it possible for more individuals to determine what their doctor's instructions and intentions are. This will save countless lives.

We offer our support and thanks to the FDA for this courageous decision that will continue to allow the approval of safe and efficacious medicines for consumers.

Sincerely,

Jackie Wuska

Jackie Wuska
President and Executive Director
The Literacy Council

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Thank you.

Jackie Wagsler

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